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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 161404Z DEC 74
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8180
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT VC
SUBJ: CATO NAMES CABINET

REF: BTN A-121 & BTN 2120

1. ACCORDING TO A REUTER'S REPORT, ST VINCENT'S NEW PREMIER R. MILTON CATO HAS MOVED SWIFTLY TO NAME A CABINET WHICH INCLUDES HIS FORMER POLITICAL RIVAL AND APPARENTLY NOW STAUNCH ALLY, EBENEZER T. JOSHUA, AS TRADE AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER. JOSHUA'S APPOINTMENT TO THE CABINET IS SEEN AS PAYMENT FOR THE "DEAL" THAT JOSHUA AND CATO CONCLUDED WHICH BROUGHT DOWN THE MITCHELL-PPP ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT. CATO'S ST VINCENT LABOUR PARTY AND JOSHUA'S PEOPLE'S POLITICAL PARTY WON 10 SEATS AND 2 SEATS, RESPECTIVELY, IN THE THIRTEEN SEAT HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY; THE 13TH WENT TO FORMER PREMIER JAMES F. MITCHELL, AN "INDEPENDENT." CABINET IS AS FOLLOWS:

R. MILTON CATO- PREMIER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE
EBENEZER T. JOSHUA-MINISTER OF TRADE AND AGRICULTURE
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HUDSON K. TANNIS-MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, WORKS & LABOUR

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RANDOLPH R. RUSSELL-MINISTER OF HEALTH, HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
GRAFTON ISAACS-MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND TOURISM
CHARLES ST CLAIR DACON-MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
VINCENT BEACHE-PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF TRADE AND AGRICULTURE
LEVI C. LATHAM-PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A DEPUTY PREMIER IS EXPECTED TO BE NAMED SHORTLY.

2. COMMENT: THE NEW CATO GOVERNMENT INCLUDES SEVERAL PERSONS WHO WERE MINISTERS IN THE LAST CATO GOVT (1967-1972). HUDSON K. TANNIS SERVED AS MINISTER OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION AS WELL AS MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, WORKS AND LABOUR IN THE LAST CATO GOVT. LATHAM DID A STINT AS MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, WORKS, AND LABOR FOLLOWED BY A PERIOD OF SERVICE AS MINISTER OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. DACON WAS APPOINTED EDUCATION & HEALTH MINISTER BY CATO FOLLOWING THE 1972 GENERAL ELECTIONS BUT DID NOT SERVE MORE THAN A FEW DAYS, BECAUSE CATO RESIGNED AFTER MITCHELL JOINED WITH JOSHUA TO FORM THE ALLIANCE GOVT.

AS HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, THE SVLP (BTN A-121) HAS HAD DIVISIONS WITHIN ITS RANKS, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE OLDER POLITICIANS, CATO AND LATHAM, ON ONE HAND AND THE YOUNGER, RUSSELL AND ARTHUR WILLIAMS, A NEWLY ELECTED MEMBER OF THE HOUSE, ON THE OTHER HAND. HOWEVER, CATO WHO HAS HAD A REPUTATION FOR HIGH-HANDEDNESS AND ARROGANCE IN THE PAST HAS NOW GIVEN THE YOUNG POLITICIANS LIKE RUSSELL, BEACHE AND ISAACS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT AS MINISTERS. THUS CATO, THIS TERM OF OFFICE, SEEMS MORE LIKELY TO ACCOMMODATE THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIM DURING HIS LAST TERM AS PREMIER. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT JOSHUA, WHO HAS A PENCHANT FOR PURSUING AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL COURSE, WILL REMAIN WITH THE CATO GOVT FOR LONG. HE AND HIS WIFE, WHO HOLDS THE OTHER PPP SEAT, ARE LIKELY TO BE IN OPPOSITION TO CATO SOON. OF THE THREE REMAINING SVLP HOUSE MEMBERS WITHOUT MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS, ARTHUR T. WOODS WHO WAS CATO'S CHOICE FOR HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER FOLLOWING THE 1972 ELECTION, WILL
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PROBABLY BE SELECTED AS DEPUTY PREMIER.
SIMMS

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NNN

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